- Long-term program success requires adequate and continuing funding. This is necessary to maintain a strong regulatory surveillance and enforcement effort with substantial information collection and analytical support. States should consider a variety of funding mechanisms including user and disposal fees as well as general revenues for program support.
- The federal government should also provide technical assistance to state and local governments through research on health and environmental effects of ground water contamination, fate and transport of pollutants, and technologies and strategies for water protection. The federal government should also establish criteria, guidelines, and standards for important ground water contaminants to ensure national consistency and avoid duplication of efforts among states. In addition, the federal government should provide training of state and local officials in ground water management and protection.

Political Mobilization, Support, and Funding

Adoption and implementation of a successful ground water protection program in a state or locality depends largely on a number of intangible factors that can be characterized broadly as a favorable climate for action. An important component of that climate is the existence of a ground water contamination problem. There is enormous variation across the country in the extent to which ground water is actually threatened or contaminated. Some areas, because of geology, are especially vulnerable. Others, because of heavy concentration of industrial activities, are particularly stressed. For instance, in the state of New Jersey a whole series of toxic waste incidents contaminating ground water and the air raised the public awareness, which, in turn, caused the state to develop strong professional environmental protection programs. Public awareness of health problems in this industrial state was high. New Jersey has for many years been well known for having the highest cancer risk in the nation according to National Cancer Institute surveys.

Strong environmental and public health programs often develop in states that have a tradition of concern for human welfare and environmental quality. Still other areas are so dependent on ground water as a source of water supply that possible degradation is especially serious. Objective conditions that suggest that ground water pollution is a serious matter are important in getting such issues on the political agenda but are often by no means sufficient to do so.

Equally or more important than objective conditions are public perceptions, group support, and political leadership. Following is a discussion of the circumstances under which a favorable social and political climate for strong ground water protection may arise.